

State of Idaho
DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE

C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER
Governor

700 West State Street, 3rd Floor
P.O. Box 83720
Boise, Idaho 83720-0043
Phone (208)334-4250
FAX # (208)334-4398

WILLIAM W. DEAL
Director

Editorial from the Idaho Department of Insurance Director, Bill Deal
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Contact: Tricia Carney, Public Information Specialist
Phone: 208-334-4312
Cell: 208-850-2342

Health Care Reform Issues

This has been a very difficult year for states, with mounting job loss and revenue reductions.

Governor Otter recently gave voice to a frustration level that is increasingly being expressed across the country as to the need for meaningful inclusion/discussion of current federal health care reform legislation.

While there is agreement in the need for health care reforms, the effort to increase access to and affordability of insurance will not be successful over time unless the overriding issue of rising health care costs is addressed. Whatever is done in insurance reform should be done in a manner that is consistent with sound and sustainable cost control practices.

We must take into consideration that any changes in the health insurance sector will not be effective over the long run without accompanying substantial changes in the health care delivery system such as helping consumers to be willing partners in managing chronic diseases, practicing healthy lifestyle behaviors, working to eliminate waste and inefficiency in our current systems, and the recommendation from the Governor's Select Committee on Health Care of making access to primary care a priority.

Reform efforts need to be based on a level playing field, so that all states are treated equally, while allowing the states the ability to be fiscally responsible and effective partners in solving the health care crisis.